

# THE ENGLISH LEAFLET

THE NEW ENGLAND  
ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 28, 1872

WILLIAM C. HILL, PRESIDENT

F. W. C. HERSEY, SEC'Y AND TREAS.

CHARLES SWAIN THOMAS, EDITOR

THE ENGLISH LEAFLET is published by the New England Association of Teachers of English, every month except July, August, and September. Subscription price, One Dollar. Entered as second class matter May 1, 1914, at the post-office at Boston, Mass., under the acts of March 3, 1879. Editor, Charles Swain Thomas, Newtonville, Mass.; Secretary-Treasurer, F. W. C. Hersey, Warren House, Cambridge, Mass.

VOL. XVIII.

FEBRUARY 1917

NUMBER 142

## THE SIMPLIFICATION AND STANDARDIZATION OF THE TEACHING OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

S. L. GARRISON  
Worcester Academy

A certain aspiring college senior once wrote a thesis entitled "The Effect of the Tariff on England's Trade with Germany from 1860 to 1890." He spent many weary hours over the British bluebooks, added and averaged column after column of trade figures, constructed tables of statistics and complicated charts of trade progress. He made in all some thirty pages of tables and charts and wrote some fifty pages on the results shown. This wondrous product received from the instructor the terse comment: "I cannot see the barn door for the flies."

In the teaching of public speaking I submit that a similar difficulty must be confronted. The barn door is so covered with flies, such as chromatic and diatonic melody — or monad, duad, triad, tetrad, and pentad cadence, or supine, prone, reflex, and averse gestures — that many educators doubt if there is a barn door beneath. Teachers of public speaking are rightfully avoiding the old methods and the inevitable wooden results of the elocutionist. They have scraped from the door the useless decorations, but they have left in place many layers of flies crawling over and under one another like swarming bees.

Reviewers ridicule the attempts of each new text-book writer who claims to have made some progress as a result of many years' teaching experience. Scholarship and research is the cry. Yet there are many men and women who have spent all their teaching years in the study of public

speaking and the subject is no nearer a universally accepted crystallized form. There are as many different ways of teaching the subject as there are teachers of it. No teacher sees anything really good or final in any writer's text-book. In the last four numbers of the *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* I have seen but one really favorable review of a text-book on public speaking, and this book deals merely with preparing and delivering one's own speech, with emphasis on the subject matter of it. In short, none of us teachers of public speaking is willing to admit that there has yet come a Sir Galahad to whom the Holy Grail has been revealed, if I may change the metaphor employed by Mr. Ward in last October's *Leaflet*.

I am no Sir Galahad, but I believe that I have had a glimpse of the Holy Grail. One day I was grumbling as usual because I could find no elementary text-book for my junior and senior classes of public speaking.

"The teaching of oral composition is as disorganized and confused as the teaching of written composition before the days of Adams Sherman Hill and Barrett Wendell," I said.

"What did these men do?" a still small voice inquired from the other side of the room.

"Well, they simplified and standardized the subject, so that it is now reduced to the study of the four qualities of style — purity, clearness, force (meaning effectiveness), and elegance or beauty (meaning pleasingness)," I answered.

"Then why don't you teach oral composition the same way?" the voice suggested.

I started to dismiss the suggestion with a shrug, being a teacher of public speaking and therefore a superior person in my ignorance. I happened to have at the time, however, a list of the topics on which my notes for teaching were based: (1) voice production; (2) posture; (3) enunciation; (4) pronunciation; (5) resonance; (6) rate; (7) pitch; (8) inflection; (9) gesture; (10) tension; (11) nasality; and (12) melodiousness. I asked myself which of these topics could be classified under the heading of purity of delivery. The answer came quickly and surely: enunciation and pronunciation. After I had gone through the whole list, I found that I could fit into the plan all the topics except the first one, voice production, the production of mere sounds as contrasted with speech, the production of sounds expressing ideas.

"The preliminary matter of how the voice is produced does not fit into the plan," I said.

I realized then that this is a fundamental matter corresponding to the teaching of penmanship in written composition. It must of course be taught before the qualities of good delivery are taught. I rearranged my outline and this is the result:

I. Elements of Voice Production

- A. The motor element: the breath
- B. The vibratory element: the vocal cords
- C. The forming element: the pharynx, the mouth, and the nose

II. Elements of Good Speech

A. Purity

- 1. Enunciation
- 2. Pronunciation

B. Clearness

- 1. Resonance
- 2. Obstructions to passage of the voice (avoidance of)
- 3. Tendency to speak too rapidly (avoidance of)
- 4. Articulation

C. Force (Effectiveness)

- 1. Inflection
- 2. Emphasis
- 3. Pitch
- 4. Pause
- 5. Gesture

D. Beauty (Pleasingness)

- 1. Grace of posture
- 2. Nasality (avoidance of)
- 3. Melodiousness

Frankly, the scheme worked beyond my fondest expectation. The light seems to shine rose-red, with a glory that was never of the old confused way of arranging the topics. But the eternal question is still present. Is the problem solved? Is the barn door cleared of its flies? Is the Holy Grail revealed? What are the advantages of treating the subject in this way? To me it seems that such a method would both simplify and standardize the teaching of public speaking.



As long as a text-book intended for secondary school students can contain a paragraph like the following, the need of simplifying the teaching of public speaking cannot be questioned:

"Chromatic Melody is made up of many inflections and waves which run through Semitonic and other minor intervals of the minor scale. It is largely composed of Semitones and minor Thirds and may occur on any degree of Pitch. We have seen that Semitones respond to the Emotive nature of man; hence Chromatic melody, composed so largely of Semitones, belongs to the Emotive division and is the medium of expression for *sad emotions, plaintiveness, tenderness, pity, sorrow, and wailing.*"

As long as another book can have page after page of drawings of the mouth and tongue, and still another, five illustrations of "some common faults in the formation of the hand with palm up", the need of simplification seems to be beyond question.

As to the need of standardizing the teaching of public speaking, nearly all are agreed. Will the grouping of matter under the proposed heads serve as a *deus ex machina* to untangle all the threads and untie the knots of our subject? Some will contend, no doubt, that I am proposing mere pigeonholes in which materials are to be filed. Even if that be true, a great step in advance will be made. We shall at least know where to find certain materials, and our students, none too bright in the average, will have some gleams about what we are trying to accomplish.

I believe, however, that the plan is more than a mere filing system. To me it seems to lay the emphasis on the end and not on the means. My great criticism of our present day books is the tendency to over-emphasize certain features of the subject. Undoubtedly the proposed plan will be subjected to the same criticism, but that would be question-begging, for the basis of the plan is that the emphasis should be placed on the purposes of the teaching rather than on the details. If we can keep constantly in mind the end we desire—which is surely a pure, clear, forcible (meaning effective), and beautiful (meaning pleasing) delivery—we shall not be tempted to discover so many ultimates or secrets of the subject, to delude ourselves into thinking that concreteness, or pictures of the vocal organs, or action, or correct breathing can be fused into the philosophers' stone in teaching public speaking.

The first great advantage of the plan is that it gives us a clear sense of the due proportion of things.

The second advantage seems to lie in the simplification of the subject. The table of contents of any text-book of to-day contains a jumble of chapters on all conceivable subjects. As one writer put it:

"We have been tucking snugly under one tent — main show, menagerie, side-show, cooking outfit, and ticket wagon."

I have furthermore failed to find two text-books by different authors which use the same terms for all the ideas involved in *inflection*. Do we need all the ramifications? Do we have to have all the divergences? My personal experience is that in the very limited time at the disposal of the class, the subject must be limited to its very fundamentals. Individual instruction in the desired direction comes naturally in the personal conference. My whole idea is that of the great need of teachers of elementary public speaking is for a clear, simple statement of the fundamentals. We have not time for the fine points.

The final advantage is that the plan if accepted would standardize the teaching of the subject. While it would force upon no one any particular methods, it would serve to visualize the use of every item in securing the purposes of the teaching. It would clarify the subject by eliminating non-essentials. Finally, in the universal acceptance and recognition of our evident purposes, it would tend to make just as evident, and thus crystallize, the methods of attaining those purposes. Then indeed would the subject be standardized; then indeed should we cease to wander aimlessly in the wilds without hint or trace of the Holy Grail.

The vision is one that I hope will do something toward making the path plain to the long desired goal — a simplified and standardized system of teaching public speaking. Let us limit ourselves to the true fundamentals; let us keep ever in mind the purposes of our teaching. Let some one, with these things in mind, give us a satisfactory elementary text-book.

Up! Ye Knights of the Round Table! Ride if need be the twelvemonth and a day! Up! Sir Galahad, wherever and whoever you may be! Don your golden spurs and richest mail! And — swat those flies!



## RECENT ENGLISH BOOKS.

*Selections from Coleridge: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Christabel, and Kubla Khan.* Edited by Lincoln R. Gibbs, Professor of English in the University of Pittsburgh. Ginn and Co.

Scott's *Ivanhoe*. Edited by William D. Lewis. Price 60 cents. Ginn and Co.

Goldsmith's *Deserted Village, The Traveller*. Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*. Edited by Louise Pound. Price, 25 cents. Ginn and Co.

Macaulay's *Speeches on Copyright and Lincoln's Address at Cooper Union*. Edited by Charles Robert Gaston, Ph.D.

Scott's *Ivanhoe*. Edited by A. Marion Merrill, Head of English Department, Somerville High School. Allyn and Bacon.

*English Composition as a Social Problem.* By Sterling Andrus Leonard, A.M., Instructor in English, Horace Mann School, Teachers College, Columbia University. Riverside Educational Monographs. Price, 70 cents net. Houghton Mifflin Company.

*The Sonnets of Shakespeare.* Variorum Edition. Edited by Raymond M. Alden, Stanford University. Price, \$6.00. Houghton Mifflin Company.

This is unquestionably the most complete and most scholarly edition of the Sonnets. The volume is uniform with the Furness Edition of Shakespeare's plays.

*Practical English Composition.* Book IV. By Edwin L. Miller, Principal of the Northwestern High School, Detroit. Price, 45 cents. Houghton Mifflin Company.

*Supervised Study.* By A. L. Hall-Quest, Professor of Educational Psychology and Principles of Teaching, University of Virginia. \$1.25. The Macmillan Company.

The book has a helpful chapter on the supervising of English study.

*Practical English for High Schools.* By William D. Lewis, Principal of William Penn High School, Phila., and James Fleming Hosie, Head of Department of English, Chicago Normal College. American Book Company.

The book is one of the best of the recent text-books on composition. It is vital, suggestive, and practical. One of the principles enforced is that "the best teaching requires a real social situation in the classroom."

# Stone and Garrison's Essentials of Argument

By ARTHUR P. STONE, Instructor in English in Harvard University and STEWART L. GARRISON, Instructor in English and Public Speaking in Worcester Academy.

xii + 332 pp. 12 mo. \$1.30

W. H. DAVIS, *Bowdoin College* :—

I have adopted the textbook for my course this year ; I like its common sense and four-square-ness. I find the chapter on Debating free from superfluous material, more pointed, saner and more sensible than any corresponding chapter which I have read. The unacademic approach to this subject, as illustrated by that chapter, seems to me indispensable to success and soundness in teaching the subject. The refreshing and stimulating feature of the book, I find, is that it furnishes a fillip and a supplement to common sense, not a substitute for it.

SIDNEY N. MORSE, *Williston Seminary* :—

I find in it irreducible elements of debating. It is not abstruse ; it is not tiresome. It has an attractive coloring of phrase that appeals to me. I like especially the pages on Fallacies. There is a touch of rhetoric in the book--not often felt in a book of argument--that reflects the power of thought when rightly expressed.

---

## HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

34 West 33d Street  
NEW YORK

6 Park Street  
BOSTON

2451 Prairie Ave.  
CHICAGO

---

“The doors of wisdom are never shut.”

*Poor Richard's Almanack.*

---

## “The Most Daring Departure

from the past” is the way a competent critic in *The English Journal* characterizes

### Lewis and Hosic's Practical English for High Schools

He goes on to say that “it is the most sensibly balanced and finely executed piece of work in this particular field of English that the present has produced.”

This book aims to equip the pupil with a method of work rather than with a theory of rhetoric ; its composition work is evolved from real situations and personal experiences ; oral English is emphasized ; non-essentials are eliminated ; there is no pedantry nor condescension ; the book is dynamic, invigorating and thoroughly practical.

---

## AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

New York

Cincinnati

Chicago

Boston



## Standard English Classics

Following immediately after the selection of titles to be read in the English class comes the selection of editions. The edition must be an authoritative one, it must contain certain editorial material prepared with taste and good judgment, and its dress must be durable and attractive. All of these conditions are satisfied in good measure by the Standard English Classics, whose uniformly low price is a further argument in their behalf.

### RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE SERIES

Coleridge Selections (Gibbs)	.24
Defoe Robinson Crusoe (Trent)	.60
Goldsmith Deserted Village and the Traveller with Grav's Elegy (Pound)	.25
Scott Ivanhoe (Lewis)	.60
Smith Short Stories, Old and New	.48

### GINN AND COMPANY

15 ASHBURTON PLACE

BOSTON

## New English Texts

### Practical English Composition

By E. L. MILLER

BOOK IV. The last in this unusual series of high school texts. Its specific subject is public speaking. Accordingly it contains exercises in logic, argumentation, persuasion, oratory, and debating, with a brief review of description, narration, and exposition. *45 cents. Postpaid.*

### Self-Cultivation in English and The Glory of the Imperfect

By G. H. PALMER

These two essays which already have afforded inspiration and practical guidance to thousands of students, are now available in inexpensive form. *Riverside Literature Series. No. 249. Paper, 16 cents. Postpaid.*

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY, 4 Park St., BOSTON